



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 21 June 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
21 JUNE 1968

1. Soviet Union

Ambassador Dobrynin says he has been ordered to fly home on Saturday. He has had to cancel a dinner engagement here on Wednesday in order to make the trip.

We suspect the Soviet leadership wants to have him on hand for the regular meeting of the Supreme Soviet (Parliament) on Wednesday. These are often routine affairs, but in this case something may be said about the Paris talks or Soviet-American relations.

2. Arab States -
Israel

Egypt and Israel have both moved troops into a disputed area near the Suez Canal following the killing of five Egyptian soldiers there on Tuesday. Any clash would probably spread to other points along the canal.

There may also be incidents along the Israeli-Jordanian cease-fire line. The Israelis claim the Jordanians recently used mortar and artillery fire against settlements on the Israeli side, and they say they will feel forced to respond in kind unless the bombardment stops.

3. Soviet Union

The Soviet naval contingent in the Mediterranean has been reduced at least temporarily. The reduction is small--from a little more than 30 ships to a little under that number--and probably does not presage a major withdrawal.

The prolonged operation of the larger contingent has strained Soviet resources. Most of the ships now in the Mediterranean are in port or at anchor.

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4. South Vietnam

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5. Poland

[redacted] the long-disputed central committee meeting will probably be held in July or August. This suggests that although Gomulka is still not entirely sure of himself, he thinks he has won back a good deal of ground from the hardliners around Interior Minister Moczar.

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We hear [redacted] that it was Gomulka who was responsible for bringing the anti-Semitic campaign to an almost complete halt last month. This was a campaign with which Moczar and his allies had been closely identified. As the meeting approaches, the friction between the two leadership groups will probably grow.

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6. Czechoslovakia

The Dubcek regime has hinted that it will permit the establishment of new political parties. Such parties and any other interest groups would have to operate within the framework of the National Front, a catch-all grouping which is dominated by the Communists. They apparently would have a definite voice in policy formation, however. The Czechoslovak interior minister says 70 new "organizations" have already requested the regime's sanction.

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The long-heralded Warsaw Pact exercise got under way in Czechoslovakia yesterday.

7. Greece

Papadopoulos shuffled his cabinet yesterday. The changes are confined to second-echelon ministries; the important portfolios remain in the same hands.

Our embassy believes a good many of the new men may be improvements over their predecessors. It also notes that Papadopoulos succeeded in keeping the revolutionary junta out of the lineup, perhaps at the cost of alienating some of its members.

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King Constantine, meanwhile, has told Ambassador Ackley that he remains in desultory contact with Athens, but he showed no sense of urgency about a reconciliation. He has recently been traveling and talking to such diverse personalities as Harold Wilson and the Shah of Iran, both of whom gave him the congenial advice that he should bide his time.

8. France

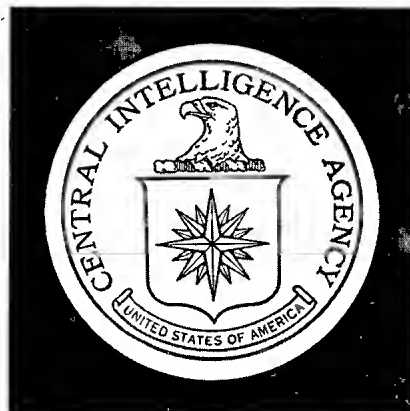
As Sunday's Assembly elections approach, the French voter seems strangely apathetic, possibly because he feels the election will solve nothing. The Gaullists are trumpeting warnings of the Communist peril, the Communists are trying to score a victory over the non-Communist left, and the center parties are urging voters to support a "third way" between left and right. Everyone, in short, is mouthing generalities and no one is dealing substantively with the social and economic issues which recently paralyzed France.

Predictions about the outcome are risky. Sunday will be just the first round of the elections, and a run-off is scheduled for 30 June. Between the two rounds, a complex bargaining process will take place among the parties which will determine which candidates will run on the second ballot. The Gaullists, with their "red peril" theme, are hoping the anti-Communist reflex is more powerful among voters than it has been in the past. If it is, they may get their absolute majority.

Even the French pollsters are shying away from this one. Our embassy has reported the results from only two samplings. Both of these indicate that the Gaullists and a small, far left party which has identified itself with student grievances may make modest gains, and that the Communists, the center, and Francois Mitterrand's leftist federation may lose a few seats.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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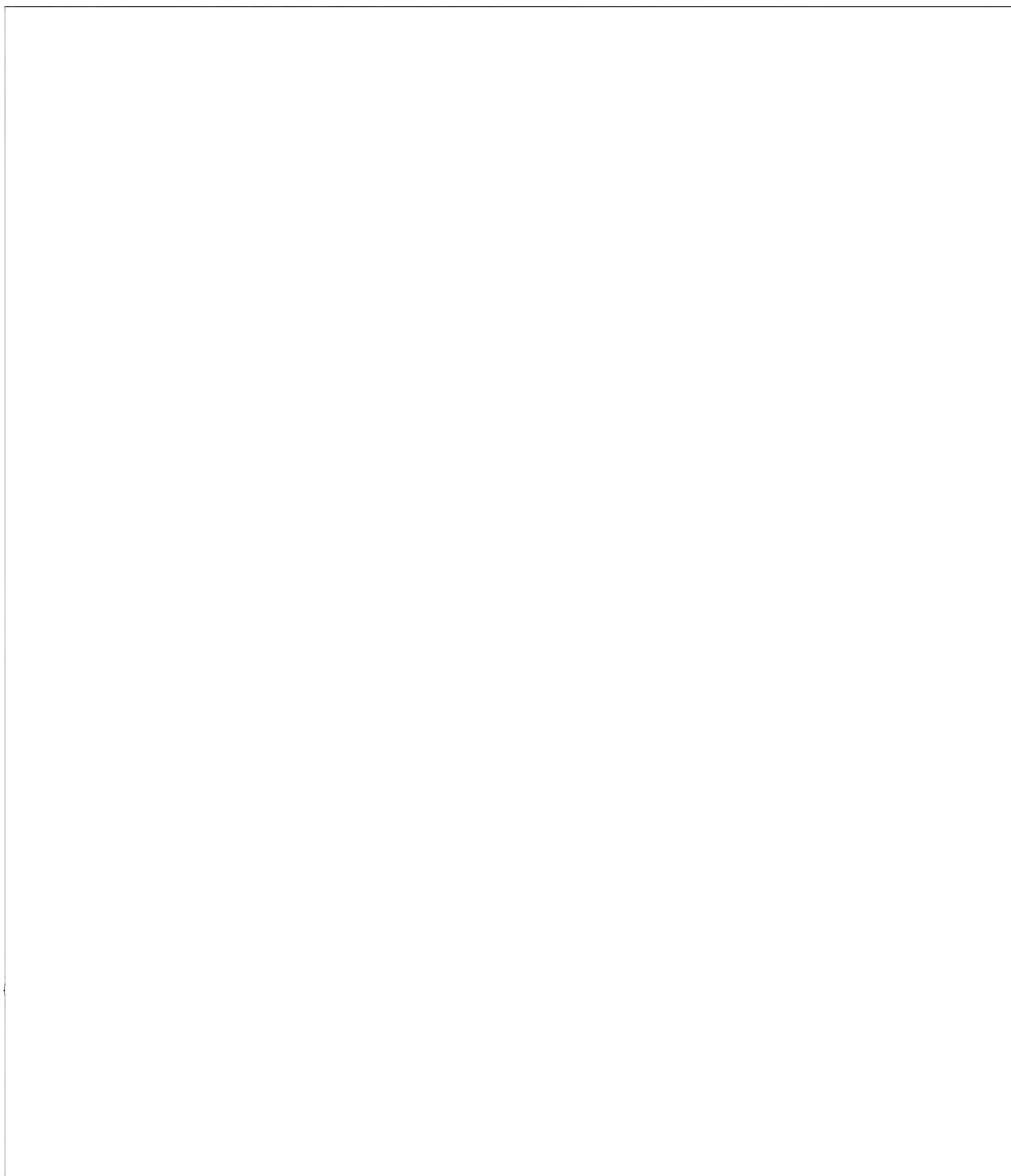
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**Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only**

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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UK-Schoenman: Ralph Schoenman, US citizen who is Lord Russell's secretary and an anti-Vietnam-war advocate, evaded British authorities and sneaked into the country last week. His whereabouts there are unknown. British authorities slapped an entry ban on him last March and he would be deported if found. The London press reports that the home office has begun an investigation to determine how Schoenman was able to evade immigration authorities.

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Repairs to Bridge Finished: The Paul Doumer Bridge appears to be open to traffic with repairs largely completed. Photography taken Tuesday showed the last of seven spans replaced and all decking finished. It also was noted that there are 19 road and rail by-passes around the bridge.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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